



Florida Agricultural Statistics Service  
1222 Woodward Street  
Orlando, Florida 32803  
407 / 648-6013  
<http://www.nass.usda.gov/fl>



# FARM LABOR

February 21, 2001

## FLORIDA

The number of workers paid by farmers and agricultural services totaled 73,000 for the week of January 7 through 13. Farmers hired 55,000 workers compared with 50,000 in October 2000 and 60,000 in January 2000. Agricultural Services hired 18,000 paid workers compared with 11,000 last quarter and 16,000 a year ago. Southern Peninsula producers scrambled to salvage vegetables and other crops damaged by the earlier freeze with cool temperatures and scattered rains prevailing during the survey week. Sugarcane producers stepped up harvesting to save the freeze damaged crop before further deterioration with mills running 24 hours a day. Citrus grove caretakers cut cover crops prior to picking to help prevent fires.

Ranchers fed hay to cattle throughout much of the State due to the drought preventing proper development of winter forages.

The January 2001 wage rate for all hired workers averaged \$8.37 per hour, 36 cents below the \$8.73 per hour paid in October, but three cents above the \$8.34 paid last year. Farmers paid an average of \$8.29 per hour, 43 cents below the \$8.72 paid last quarter, but a penny above the \$8.28 paid last year. Agricultural Services paid workers an average of \$8.70 per hour compared with \$8.80 paid last quarter and \$8.60 paid last year.

## UNITED STATES

There were 841,000 hired workers on the Nation's farms and ranches the week of January 7-13, 2001, down 2 percent from a year ago. There were 678,000 workers hired directly by farm operators. Agricultural service employees on farms and ranches made up the remaining 163,000 workers. Migrant workers accounted for 10.0 percent of the January hired workforce compared with 7.7 percent last year.

Farm operators paid their hired workers an average wage of \$8.65 per hour during the January 2001 survey week, up 55 cents from a year earlier. Field workers received an average of \$7.71 per hour, up 46 cents from last January. Livestock workers earned \$8.09 per hour compared with \$7.61 a year earlier. The Field and Livestock worker combined wage rate was up 48 cents from last year.

The number of hours worked averaged 36.9 hours for hired workers during the survey week compared with 38.4 hours a year ago.

The largest increases in number of hired farm workers over last year occurred in the Southern Plains (Oklahoma and Texas), Appalachian II (Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia), and Northeast I (New England and New York) regions. In the Southern Plains region, unusually cold weather providing limited wheat pasture for grazing, caused an increase in livestock workers needed to help ranchers move cattle to appropriate feeding areas. Nursery work was also active in the

region. In Appalachian II, additional workers were needed primarily for tobacco stripping and extra livestock maintenance because of the harsh weather in December. Favorable weather in Northeast I allowed for pruning orchards and vineyards. Other activities in the region included packing and grading fruits and vegetables from storage, additional nursery work, caring for livestock, and general farm maintenance.

The largest decreases in number of hired farm workers from a year ago were in the Delta (Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi), Corn Belt II (Iowa and Missouri), and Lake (Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) regions. Farmers in part of the Delta region were recovering from ice storms and snow in the weeks leading up to the survey. Weather during the survey week was mostly damp and cool prompting farmers to use fewer workers. In Corn Belt II, unfavorable weather allowed for little farm work during the survey week. Farmers were dealing with rain and snow by week's end primarily in western areas of the region. In the Lake region, farm activity was limited to general farm maintenance and livestock work.

Hired farm worker wage rates were generally above a year ago in all regions. The largest increases occurred in the Corn Belt II, California, Appalachian I (North Carolina and Virginia), Corn Belt I (Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio), and Northern Plains (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas) regions. The higher wages in these regions were generally attributable to fewer seasonal workers on the payroll.

**Table 1 -- Florida agricultural workers, number of workers, wage rates, and hours worked, January 7 - 13, 2001, with comparisons**

Employer, Year, and survey week		Hired Workers						
		Number of workers			Hours Worked Per Week	Wages Paid by Type of Work		
		All	Expected to work			All	Field	Livestock
150 days or more	149 days or less							
HIRED BY FARMERS								
2001		Thousands		Hours	Dollars Per Hour <sup>1/</sup>			
	January 7 - 13, 2001	55.0	47.0	8.0	37.6	8.29	7.65	7.90
2000								
	October 8 - 14	50.0	43.0	7.0	38.9	8.72	8.00	7.30
	July 9 - 15	46.0	42.0	4.0	42.0	8.47	7.75	7.45
	April 9 - 15	70.0	62.0	8.0	40.4	8.53	7.70	7.80
	January 9 - 15	60.0	48.0	12.0	41.9	8.28	7.40	7.50
1999								
	October 10 - 16	58.0	47.0	11.0	38.8	8.05	7.05	7.00
	July 11 - 17	45.0	40.0	5.0	39.7	8.32	7.25	7.30
	April 11 - 17	54.0	46.0	8.0	41.1	8.18	7.40	6.90
	January 10 - 16	55.0	48.0	7.0	39.1	8.31	7.35	7.00
HIRED BY AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2001								
	January 7 - 13, 2001	18.0			29.5	8.70		
2000								
	October 8 - 14	11.0			32.0	8.80		
	July 9 - 15	2.0			43.0	9.00		
	April 9 - 15	12.0			36.5	8.50		
	January 9 - 15	16.0			36.5	8.60		
1999								
	October 10 - 16	5.0			32.0	8.65		
	July 11 - 17	3.0			45.0	8.85		
	April 11 - 17	9.0			38.0	8.30		
	January 10 - 16	12.0			35.0	8.50		
HIRED BY BOTH FARMERS & AGRICULTURAL SERVICES								
2001								
	January 7 - 13, 2001	73.0				8.37		
2000								
	October 8 - 14	61.0				8.73		
	July 9 -15	48.0				8.49		
	April 9 - 15	82.0				8.53		
	January 9 - 15	76.0				8.34		
1999								
	October 10 - 16	63.0				8.09		
	July 11 - 17	48.0				8.36		
	April 11 - 17	63.0				8.20		
	January 10 - 16	67.0				8.34		

<sup>1/</sup> Benefits, such as housing and meals, are provided some workers but the values are not included in the wage rates.

**Table 2 -- Number of workers hired by farmers, wage rates, and hours worked,  
selected States, January 7 - 13, 2001, with comparisons <sup>1/</sup>**

Item	Florida	California	Texas & Oklahoma	Arizona & New Mexico	Hawaii	United States <sup>2/</sup>
Thousands						
<b>All hired workers</b>						
<b>January 7 - 13, 2001</b>	55	190	65	18	7	678
October 8 - 14, 2000	50	242	61	21	8	952
<b>January 9 - 15, 2000</b>	60	204	44	20	8	685
<b>Expected to work</b>						
<b>150 days or less</b>						
<b>January 7 - 13, 2001</b>	47	148	54	16	6	560
October 8 - 14, 2000	43	184	49	18	7	662
<b>January 9 - 15, 2000</b>	48	152	32	18	7	540
<b>149 days or less</b>						
<b>January 7 - 13, 2001</b>	8	42	11	2	1	118
October 8 - 14, 2000	7	58	12	3	1	290
<b>January 9 - 15, 2000</b>	12	52	12	2	1	145
Dollars per hour <sup>3/</sup>						
<b>All hired worker wage rate</b>						
<b>January 7 - 13, 2001</b>	8.29	8.75	7.98	7.72	10.66	8.65
October 8 - 14, 2000	8.72	8.44	7.59	7.52	10.73	8.29
<b>January 9 - 15, 2000</b>	8.28	7.94	7.52	7.22	10.40	8.10
<b>Wages by type of worker</b>						
<b>Field &amp; Livestock</b>						
<b>January 7 - 13, 2001</b>	7.67	7.86	7.53	6.91	9.10	7.85
October 8 - 14, 2000	7.86	7.79	6.95	6.96	9.07	7.76
<b>January 9 - 15, 2000</b>	7.41	7.12	7.08	6.57	8.90	7.37
<b>Field</b>						
<b>January 7 - 13, 2001</b>	7.65	7.65	7.35	6.71	9.07	7.71
October 8 - 14, 2000	8.00	7.70	6.71	6.71	9.05	7.74
<b>January 9 - 15, 2000</b>	7.40	7.02	7.06	6.51	8.96	7.25
<b>Livestock</b>						
<b>January 7 - 13, 2001</b>	7.90	8.99	7.71	7.35	<sup>4/</sup>	8.09
October 8 - 14, 2000	7.30	8.65	7.30	7.73	<sup>4/</sup>	7.84
<b>January 9 - 15, 2000</b>	7.50	8.00	7.10	6.83	<sup>4/</sup>	7.61
Average hours per week						
<b>Hours worked by all hired workers</b>						
<b>January 7 - 13, 2001</b>	37.6	35.7	38.1	44.2	35.6	36.9
October 8 - 14, 2000	38.9	43.2	37.3	43.6	35.8	41.2
<b>January 9 - 15, 2000</b>	41.9	42.7	37.6	43.5	36.6	38.4

<sup>1/</sup> Excludes Agricultural Service workers. <sup>2/</sup> United States excludes Alaska. <sup>3/</sup> Value of any perquisites provided are not included in wage rates. <sup>4/</sup> Insufficient data for this category; included in all hired wages.

## Reliability of Farm Labor Estimates

**Survey Procedures:** These data were collected by the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) during the last two weeks of January using sampling procedures to ensure every employer of agricultural workers had a chance of being selected.

Two samples of farm operators are selected. First, NASS maintains a list of farms that hire farm workers. Farms on this list are classified by size and type. Those expected to employ large numbers of workers are selected with greater frequency than those hiring few or no workers. A second sample consists of segments of land scientifically selected from an area sampling frame. Each June, highly trained interviewers locate each selected land segment and identify every farm operating land within the sample segment's boundaries. The names of farms found in these area segments are matched against the NASS list of farms; those not found on the list are included in the labor survey sample to represent all farms. This methodology is known as multiple frame sampling, with an area sample used to measure the incompleteness of the list. Additionally, a list of agricultural service firms was sampled in California and Florida. The survey reference week was January 7-13, 2001.

**Reliability:** Two types of errors, sampling and nonsampling, are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey. Both types affect the "precision" of the estimates.

Sampling error occurs because a complete census is not taken. The sampling error measures the variation in estimates from the average of all possible samples. An estimate of 100 with a sampling error of 1 would mean that chances are 19 out of 20 that the estimates from all possible samples averaged together would be between 98 and 102; which is the survey estimate, plus or minus two times the sampling error. The sampling error expressed as a percent of the estimate is called the relative sampling error. The relative sampling error for number of hired workers at the U.S. level was 3.9 percent. The relative sampling error for the number

of hired workers generally ranged between 9 and 25 percent at the regional level. The U.S. all hired farm worker wage rate had a relative sampling error of 1.1 percent. The relative sampling error was 1.0 percent for the combined field and livestock worker wage rate. Relative sampling errors for the all hired farm worker wage rate generally ranged between 2 and 7 percent at the regional levels. Relative sampling errors for wage rates published by type of farm and economic class of farm ranged between 2 and 21 percent at the regional level.

Nonsampling errors can occur in a complete census as well as in sample surveys. They are caused by the inability to obtain correct information from each operation sampled, differences in interpreting questions or definitions, and mistakes in editing, coding, or processing the data. Special efforts are taken at each step of the survey to minimize nonsampling errors.

**Revision Policy:** Farm labor information is subject to revision the next time the information is published or the year after the original publication date. The basis for revision must be supported by additional data that directly affect the level of the estimate. Worker numbers and wage rates for October 2000 and January 2000 were subject to revision with this report. Revisions were made and previous data are reprinted in this report for your information.

**Next Farm Labor Publication Date:** The May 18th report will have information for the survey week of April 8-14, 2001. The report will include the number of All Hired Workers, Average Hours Worked by Hired Workers, and the All Hired Worker Wage Rates at the regional and U.S. levels. The wage rate for field, livestock, and combined field and livestock workers will also be available at the regional and U.S. level. The number of Agricultural Service Workers and the corresponding wage rates will be published for California and Florida.